

**Characters**

- FRED
- FINA
- TATO
- ELENA
- CLARA
- NICK
- TOÑA

**Act 1**

**Act 1, Scene 1**

Scene 1

Music plays. It is morning. FINA sits down right of the table facing front. SHE looks up at the ceiling absorbed in her thoughts. There is the sound of things being thrown around from the kitchen. Then there is the sound of a refrigerator door closing. FRED enters carrying an armload of wilted greens. HE throws them on the table.

FRED

Do you intend to cook this?

(FINA looks at the greens)

Do you?

(SHE is still looking at the greens)

I go out of my way to get fresh vegetables and you let them get like this?

(Short pause)

These vegetables are stale! -Why do you let them get like that?

FINA

Like what!

FRED

Like that! -Are these cooked vegetables? -Or are they raw!

(SHE looks at him)

Did you sit on them! -They look like someone sat on them!

FINA

You want fresh vegetables! -Marry an Italian!

FRED

You're right!

(Short pause)

I should've married a woman who could cook!

The lights fade to black. Music plays. In the blackout the actor playing FRED brings in more greens and puts them on the table. The actress playing FINA gets a comb from her pocket. THEY move the chairs as indicated in the following scene. Hereafter when indicating the actors' movements during the blackouts the names FINA and FRED will be used.

## **Act 1, Scene 2**

### Scene 2

Three months later. It is morning. FINA sits to the right of the table facing front. Her chair is a few inches further upstage. Her elbow leans on the table. SHE holds a comb in her right hand. FRED sits straddling the up left leg of the table. There is now a larger amount of stale greens on the table. To the left of the stale greens there is a small pile of fresh greens.

FRED

I can't stand the way you cook. -These ones are stale! These are fresh! -You cook these -and you let these go bad! -Why is that, Fina? -Do you think the stale ones taste better!

FINA

No.

HE stands.

FRED

Do you think they have more vitamins?

FINA

No.

FRED

Do you think they make the meat taste better?

FINA

No.

FRED

Then, why do you do it?

SHE stands.

FINA

Because!

FRED

What do you mean because!

FINA

Because if I cook the fresh ones, these would go bad!

FRED

These are already bad!

FINA

Not yet!

The lights fade to half. FINA walks to the bedroom and sits on the upstage side of the bed with her back to the audience. FRED sits facing front. There is a light on him. The rest of the stage is darkened. Music starts. FRED sings.

FRED

I wanted to have a house,  
just like this one,  
just like this one,  
with a kitchen on the side.  
I wanted a wife in my house,  
a bed always made  
in my home, in my house.  
I wanted the things in my house nice and clean.  
all in its place,  
in its own space.  
I wanted the things to be tidy and clean  
in the closet folded. I wanted to have a house,  
just like this one,  
with a sunny kitchen,  
with a stove and a sink  
like this one,  
just like this one,  
in my house.

I thought I'd be happy,  
with my wife,  
in my house,  
with my wife,  
Fina, with you.

The lights fade to black. Music plays. FINA moves her chair about four feet to the left. FRED takes the greens offstage, brings in an electric bulb socket with wiring and a screwdriver and places his chair to face the table.

### **Act 1, Scene 3**

Scene 3

Two years later. It is evening. FRED sits to the left of the table. HE is repairing a light fixture. FINA sits to the right a few feet from the table. SHE faces FRED.

FINA

Look, Fred, I'm leaving. I'm going to enjoy life. You're sour. You talk about stale and sour vegetables and you are stale and sour. You don't like my clothes because you say they are gray with dirt. You say I don't wash them well and they get gray. You say that's not their color. You say they will never regain their color. -I don't know and I don't care.

(SHE goes to the closet, takes off her dress and starts to put on another dress)

Here is my dress. -I'm putting it on.

(Taking a purse and putting it on the back of the chair)

I'm taking my bag that you say is old-fashioned and seedy.

(Putting on a hat)

I'm putting on my hat that you say looks a mess.

(SHE returns to her chair with a pair of shoes and starts to put them on)

I'm putting on my shoes that you say need repair. You say they need new heels and soles and the top looks a mess. -I don't care what you say.

(SHE stands)

I'm going to have some fun.

(SHE goes to the door, music starts, SHE exits, SHE takes a few steps back in and sings)

In the place where you should have a brain  
I never thought I'd find an empty space.  
In the place where you should have a heart  
you have a snake and the brain of a bird!

When I promised to marry  
I didn't have a worry.  
I did it without knowing  
that I was stepping into hell.

Farewell, this is not enough.  
It's not what I thought it would be.  
Oh...good-bye,  
I've got to get away.  
I don't care what you say.  
I want to be free.

I raised my glass in hopeful joy.  
Someone made a toast we drank again.  
I listened to church bells,  
joyful, contented.  
What did I know.

When I promised to marry  
I didn't have a worry.  
I did it without knowing  
that I was stepping into hell.

Farewell, this is not enough.  
It's not what I thought it would be.  
Oh...good-bye,  
I've got to get away.  
I don't care what you say.  
I want to be free.

(SHE walks to the doorway and speaks)

Good-bye, Fred. You're a dull duck.

SHE exits. HE follows her to the door.

FRED

Wait a moment. I'm giving you access into my life and you say you're leaving?

There is the sound of a door slamming. HE stands a moment, takes a few steps in. The lights fade to black. Music plays. FRED takes the light fixture off and pushes his chair under the table. FINA's chair is also pushed under the table.

## **Act 1, Scene 4**

### Scene 4

Two months later. It is evening. FINA stands against the wall upstage right. SHE holds her hat and purse. FRED stands down left.

FRED

Wait a moment! I'm letting you come back into my life -and you say "if"? --

(HE walks to her)

What do you mean if?

FINA

I mean if. I'm not coming back if you don't stop doing what you do.

FRED

Stop doing what?

FINA

Scream and scream.

HE goes to his chair and sits down.

FRED

I won't scream.

(HE looks at her)

I won't.

FINA

All right.

The Lights fade to black. Music plays. FINA throws her hat and purse offstage, places her chair a few feet to the right. FRED pushes his chair under the table.

## **Act 1, Scene 5**

### Scene 5

Four months later. It is evening. FINA sits four feet to the right of the table facing FRED. FRED stands four feet to the left of the table facing FINA.

FRED

Wait a moment. I'm allowing you access into my life. I'm making it possible for you to enjoy things you never enjoyed before and you don't appreciate it? You prefer your miserable life? -Don't you want to change?

FINA

For what?

FRED

For a better life.

FINA

Fred, you're driving me crazy!

The lights fade to black. Music plays. FRED places his chair against the wall. FINA's chair and the table are moved against the wall.

## **Act 1, Scene 6**

Scene 6

Six months later. It is late afternoon. TATO and FINA are in bed. TATO lies on top of her. HE moves his pelvis with extreme and rapid movements. FINA faces front. SHE is distracted.

FINA

Fuck progress. I don't give a shit about progress.

TATO

What progress?

FINA

Nothing.

(TATO is still a moment)

It's Fred. He drives me crazy.

(TATO starts moving again. Then stops)

He says I have to keep up with the times.

HE starts moving again. Then stops.

TATO

What times?

FINA

Modern times. He says now people have to work more than they used to.

TATO

They do?

FINA

Don't let it bother you. Keep going.

(TATO starts moving again)

I don't care if he comes in.

HE stops and looks at her.

TATO

Who?

FINA

Fred.

TATO

He may come in?

FINA

He may come. He may not.

HE jumps up and throws himself under the bed facing up.

TATO

He may come now?

FINA

(Leaning her head over to look under the bed)

He may.

TATO

(Putting his finger to his lips)

Shhh....

FINA returns to a prone position. The lights fade to black. Music plays. The table and dinner settings are brought center. FINA places her chair to the right of the table. FRED brings his to the left.

## **Act 1, Scene 7**

### **Scene 7**

Three months later. It is evening. FRED and FINA eat dinner.

FINA

O`K`, yes I did.

(There is silence. HE looks down)

Get pregnant. I'm pregnant.

FRED

Well, let him take care of it.

FINA

Who!

FRED

Your lover!

FINA

Who's my lover!

FRED

The Puerto Rican!

FINA

What Puerto Rican!

FRED

Tato! Who else! Tato! Your lover! Tato the Puerto Rican! Let him take care of it!

SHE looks away. The lights fade to black. Music plays. A second pillow with a bloodied sheet is placed on the bed. FINA and FRED place the silver and napkins on the plates. FRED places his chair and the plates against the wall. FINA's chair, the table and the glasses are placed against the wall.

## **Act 1, Scene 8**

Scene 8

Two weeks later. It is afternoon. FINA sits on the bed, straddling a pillow. There is blood on the sheets. SHE is downcast.

FINA

My baby's dead. -I had to kill him. -He came out of me all bloody. -He was as little as a mouse. -I don't want to do this ever again. -If I get pregnant again I'll have it. -Let Fred go to hell with himself if he doesn't want a baby. -He's not a woman! -He doesn't know how it feels. -Let him leave if he doesn't want it. -I'll go on welfare. -It wasn't his anyway. -Who'd want to have his baby. -It was Tato's I'll bet.

The lights fade to black. Music plays. The pillow and sheet are taken off. FINA brings her chair down left. SHE sits facing upstage.

## **Act 1, Scene 9**

Scene 9

One week later. It is late afternoon. FRED sits on the bed facing upstage. HE wears a suit and tie. There is a soft light on him. FINA sits down left facing him. SHE is in the dark. SHE sings.

FINA

Now he is looking at the window.

He's thinking of something.

Is he sad?

He's wearing a suit, a necktie.

Is he resting?

Maybe he needs to rest.

It's getting late.

Maybe I should start dinner now.

I think of you.

I think of a fold on your shirt

when we sat in the parlor last week,

a fold on your shirt.

I think of your arm as it lay resting on the table.

I think of you.

I think of you.



The lights fade to black. Music plays. FRED takes his jacket off. HE takes FINA's chair to the up right side. HE sits facing down left. FINA goes in the kitchen and changes to a housedress. Clothes are strewn in the bedroom.

## **Act 1, Scene 10**

### **Scene 10**

Ten years later. It is late afternoon. The table is to the right of the room. FRED sits up right. FINA is in the kitchen. There is the sound of chopping on a board. FINA is philosophical. FRED is thoughtful.

FINA

I could've left you a long time ago, you know.

FRED

You did.

FINA

I didn't really. I came right back.

(SHE enters holding a knife in one hand and celery in the other)

I could have left you for good.

FRED

(Hatefully)

Why didn't you?

FINA

I just didn't.

(Going into the kitchen)

But I could have.

There is the sound of cutting.

FRED

Why do you say that?

FINA

I didn't love you that much. I loved you about a week.

FRED

Thanks!

FINA enters.

FINA

Well, I did love you chat week.

FRED

Thanks!

FINA

(Returning to the kitchen)

You ruined it! -You kept at me!

(Music starts)

The vegetables, the dress, the smell in the kitchen!

FRED

Thanks! Thanks!

(HE goes in the kitchen and begins to throw things around)

Thanks! Look at this!

FINA

What!

FRED

And this! And this! And look at this!

(HE returns to his chair, sits, stands up again and kicks the chair)

It was true!

(HE goes to the kitchen, then to the bedroom. HE throws the clothes strewn in the bedroom into the closet)

Look at this! And this! Look at this! And this!

FRED exits through the stage right door. FINA sings.

FINA

You ruined it!

You ruined it!

I really tried.

(A box and a blanket fly into the bedroom from the stage right door)

You complaining,

never satisfied.

You ruined it.

(SHE enters the bedroom. SHE throws the box and blanket through the door stage right)

You ruined it.

I should have left you.

I should have said good-bye.

FINA goes to the stage right door. SHE backs up as FRED enters the bedroom.

FRED

(Speaking)

You did!

(FINA backs away to the kitchen door. HE sings)

It was all true. True. True!

Look at this and this and this and this.

I wanted to have a house. A house!

THEY are now facing each other across the bedroom, each in front of a door.

FRED

I wanted to have a house,

FINA

You ruined it. You ruined it.

FRED

just like this one,

FINA

I really tried.

FRED

a kitchen on the side,

FINA

You ruined it.

FRED

a wife in my house,

FINA

You ruined it.

FRED

a wife

FINA

I should have left you.

FRED

in my house,

FINA

I should have said good-bye.

BOTH

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.  
Thank you.  
Thank you!

Thank you.  
Thank you.  
Thank you!

The lights fade to black. Music plays. The chair downstage is removed.

## **Act 1, Scene 11**

### **Scene 11**

One year later. It is late afternoon. FRED is lying in bed. HE lies on his back. HE is very stiff. FINA sits up right of the bed. SHE is putting on her shoes.

FINA

Fred, I wish I hadn't had that abortion. If we'd had that baby he'd be ten now.

FRED

I wasn't going to raise Tato's baby.

FINA

You weren't as nice to me then as you are now.

FRED

No...

FINA

Why is that?

FRED

I got tired. And when you're tired you have to be nice.

FINA

Why is that?

FRED

Because you have to be strong to be mean. I'm tired and I don't feel strong enough to be mean. Besides, Fina, I was never mean.

The lights fade to black. Music plays. FINA lies in bed. FRED lies on top of her and pulls the accordionfolded sheet over them.

## **Act 1, Scene 12**

### **Scene 12**

Six months later. It is early evening. FRED and FINA are in bed. HE lies on top of her. HE moves his pelvis in a measured rhythm. HE stops moving.

FRED

I can't stand fidgety women. You've become fidgety.

FINA

I'm nervous.

FRED

Why?

FINA

Because I'm getting old. And life is over for a woman when she gets old.

FRED

That's true, you're getting old.

(Two humps. HE stops)

But don't worry. Other things happen when you get old.

(HE starts moving again)

FINA

What happens?

HE stops.

FRED

You don't have to work so hard.

(HE starts moving)

FINA

What do you mean?

HE stops.

FRED

When you get old you deserve a rest.

(HE starts moving)

FINA

Who'll do the cleaning?

HE stops.

FRED

You get appliances. Appliances do the cleaning.

(HE starts moving)

FINA

Are you going to get me appliances?

HE stops.

FRED

A little at a time.

The Lights fade to black. Music plays. FRED takes the sheet offstage. HE brings in his chair, bowls, spoons and napkins. FINA brings in her chair and cups. The table is brought in.

### **Act 1, Scene 13**

Scene 13

Five years later. It is morning. FRED and FINA eat breakfast at the table. SHE sits to the right. HE sits to the left. FINA is philosophical. FRED tries to be cordial.

FINA

Fred, were you ever...jealous...of Tato?

FRED

Yes.

FINA

Did you think I loved him?

FRED

It bothered me that you did what you did with him.

FINA

I never loved him.

FRED

You didn't?

FINA

No.

FRED

I wish I could believe that.

FINA

Fred...

FRED

What?

FINA

You know, when we made love, Tato and I...

FRED

(In hysterical rage)

Don't talk to me about that!

FINA

(Accusingly)

You're still jealous!

FRED

I should have killed him!

FINA

Why?

FRED

Because that's what I should have done!

FINA

I never loved him!

FRED

Why did you do it!

FINA

You were mean to me! I was angry! I was hurt!

FRED

(More calmly)

I know I was -mean to you.

FINA

When he made love to me...

FRED

(Hysterical)

I don't want to hear!

FINA

It's not what you think!

(HE is quiet)

When he made love to me, I used to talk to him about you. -I always did.

The lights fade to black. Music plays. FINA moves her chair up right. A hammer and a small framed landscape are placed on it. FRED places paper, pencil and a ruler on the table. The dishes, silver and napkins are removed.

## Act 1, Scene 14

### Scene 14

Three years later. It is early evening. FINA stands on a chair upstage right. SHE hammers a nail into the wall. A small picture rests against the back of the chair. FRED sits at the table. HE uses a ruler to do a geometric drawing.

FINA

Fred.

FRED

What?

SHE stops hammering but keeps looking at the nail.

FINA

I think I'm sexually repressed.

(SHE returns to hammering)

FRED

I never thought so.

FINA

Well, I was reading about it.

(SHE stops hammering but keeps looking at the nail)

By the way, Fred. What happened to all the appliances you were going to get me?

FRED

I'm getting to it.

SHE returns to hammering.

FINA

Well, I was reading about it and I think I am sexually repressed.

FRED

What were you reading?

FINA

I was reading that

(SHE stops hammering and looks at him)

if you don't do in bed all that you wish to do, that is, all that you desire, that you are sexually repressed.

(SHE returns to hammering)

FRED

And you never did all that you wished to do?



FINA

No.

FRED

Well, it's too late, Fina. We're too old now.

(SHE stops hammering)

Unless it's something easy to do.

SHE returns to hammering.

FINA

It's easy, Fred.

(SHE stops hammering and picks up the picture)

It's not anything that's going to be bad for your heart.

FRED

What is it?

SHE hangs the picture.

FINA

It's easy.

FRED

And it won't be tiring?

FINA

(Adjusting the picture)

No, Fred.

Music starts. FINA steps down and walks to center while FRED puts his chair upstage. THEY take the table upstage. THEY dance and sing.

FINA

Ah romance.

FRED

Tara ra ra ra ta tara.

In your arms.

FINA

Tara ra ra ra ta.

I tarata.

FRED

You tarata.

BOTH

We tara ta tara ta.

And we can  
tata ra  
tara ra ra.

Ven a mi.  
Tara ra ra ra ta tara.

Close to me.  
Tara ra ra ra ta.

Es un romance de amor,  
un profundo rubor  
de noches de verano  
que son ensueño del paisaje de amor. is love.

Lights fade except for a spot on their heads. THEY speak in a whisper.

Is love....

The lights fade to black. Music plays. FRED and FINA bring the table to center. Their chairs are placed upstage of the table.

## **Act 1, Scene 15**

Scene 15

Six months later. It is afternoon. FINA and FRED sit facing front, SHE to the right, HE to the left.

FINA

Fred, I have been happy with you even if we had our rough times at first. First you were mean, but then you became very nice.

FRED

I have been happy with you too, Fina. First you were very stupid. But then you became smarter and sweeter.

(SHE holds his hand)

I wouldn't mind it if I would die here like this.

(HE puts his hand on FINA)

Because I have had a good life.

FINA brings her chair closer to him.

FINA

I wouldn't mind it either, Fred.

(SHE puts her hand on his)

I love you

(FRED puts his arm around her)

and I wouldn't mind if I die here like this with you.

THEY kiss. The lights fade as a small spot comes up on the table to light a finger dance which FRED and FINA do to the music of "Ah Romance." The spot fades to black.

END OF PART I

## **Act 2**

### **Act 2, Scene 1**

Scene 1

Music plays. TATO is sitting on the upstage side of the bed, facing up. HE wears dark pants, suspenders and a white shirt. MARIA ELENA lies in bed. SHE wears a slip, a sheet covers her.

TATO

I didn't know what kind of trouble I was getting into.

MARIA ELENA

(Softly)

...Yes....

TATO

It happens all the time. This happens to me all the time.

(HE turns to look at her)

I wonder if it's all right to do something and I don't dare ask. If I ask, people laugh.

(HE goes to the left window and looks out)

I don't even know why they laugh.

(Grabbing the back of his head)

But I know I said something stupid. I don't ask anymore.

(HE turns front)

I don't want to be laughed at. I don't know what the right thing to do is. -And I fall behind.

(HE turns to her)

It started when I was at school. That's when it started, and it stayed that way every place I went. I always fall behind.

(HE stares front)

I felt, why is it like this. Is something wrong with me?

MARIA ELENA

There's nothing wrong with you. And I couldn't love you like this if there was something wrong with you. What else does a guy need?

TATO

A guy needs more than that.

MARIA ELENA

...What?

TATO

A guy needs to feel smart.

MARIA ELENA

You're smart.

TATO

No, I'm not.

(HE steps toward center)

I have a hard time at work. I always do. I don't feel good about the way things go at work. I try to do things right away as soon as I'm told to do them. But it takes me awhile. I'm slow. They don't think I'm fast enough.

(HE is restless. HE goes to the left window and turns front)

I don't know what happens. Other people can be fast, but I can't. I think I'm doing things fast because I am doing them as fast as I can.

(HE crosses to the chair and sits)

But they tell me that I'm slow. I don't know what happens.

The lights fade to black. Music plays.

## **Act 2, Scene 2**

### **Scene 2**

A few hours later. A tavern. There is a table center stage. There are three chairs around it. TATO sits up right. There is a shot glass in front of him. CLARA sits down left. SHE wears a dark green waitress uniform. There is a green hue to the lights. TATO is absorbed in his own thoughts. HE doesn't always grasp her meaning.

CLARA

You're married, aren't you.

TATO

Kind of.

CLARA

Why didn't you tell me?

TATO

What for?

CLARA

I should know. A person should know that.

TATO

I'm not married.

CLARA

You want coffee?

(HE shakes his head)

Why don't you take your jacket off?

TATO

What for?

CLARA

I like to look at your chest.

TATO

You do?

CLARA

Sure.

TATO

Why?

CLARA

I like you Tato. -You live with a woman, don't you.

TATO

Yes.

CLARA

You love her, don't you.

TATO

Yes.

CLARA

You're going to marry her.

(HE nods)

I knew you had a woman. -From the way you are.

TATO

How?

CLARA

I don't think you need me.

TATO

Not married yet.

CLARA

You want something to eat?

TATO

No....

CLARA

You remind me of someone I used to know.

TATO

Yeah?

CLARA

My uncle.

TATO

Oh yeah?

CLARA

Yeah, he died.

TATO

Oh?

CLARA

Overseas.

TATO

Oh.

CLARA

You want to see his picture.

TATO

Yeah.

(SHE walks to him taking a picture from her pocket. SHE gives it to him)

Why do I remind you of him?

SHE looks at the picture, then at him, then at the picture.

CLARA

It's the feeling I guess. The same feeling.

TATO

What's that?

SHE takes the picture. While looking at it SHE sits on the up left chair.

CLARA

...Something...a nice feeling.

TATO

Thanks.

SHE starts singing, still looking at the picture.

CLARA

He used to come and stay a while,  
my uncle Manny,  
before he went on a date,  
my uncle Manny,  
my uncle Manny.  
He came to my house.  
He came to my house  
before he went on a date. He smelled of eau de cologne,  
my uncle Manny,  
before he went on a date,  
my uncle Manny.  
My uncle Manny,  
he came to my house.  
He came to my house.  
He smelled of eau de cologne.

He went to church on Sunday,  
my uncle Manny,  
before he came to my house,  
my uncle Manny.  
My uncle Manny,  
he came to my house.  
He came on Sunday  
after he went to church.

And then he went off to war,  
my uncle Manny.  
I never saw him go,  
my uncle Manny.  
I never saw him.  
He went on Sunday.  
I never saw him  
when he went off to war.

Uncle Manny went to war  
on Sunday.  
And I  
never saw him.  
But I know  
he smelled of eau de cologne.

And now he's in heaven,  
my uncle Manny.  
He smells of roses,  
my uncle Manny.  
Now he's in heaven.  
Now he's in heaven.  
He smells of roses.  
He smells of eau de cologne.

TATO

And I remind you of him?

CLARA

Yes.

TATO

Why?

CLARA

It's a feeling, I guess. It's the same feeling.

(SHE looks away shyly)

I liked him.

TATO

I'm glad you said that.

CLARA

You are?

TATO

Yes.

CLARA

You want something to eat?

TATO

No, I don't.

CLARA

Why not.

(HE shakes his head)

You haven't eaten yet?

TATO

No.

CLARA



Why is chat?

(HE shrugs)

You don't feel good?

HE shakes his head.

TATO

How's Anna?

CLARA

She's not good.

TATO

How's the baby?

CLARA

He's the same. He's deformed. His stomach was outside him. That's how he was born. There was something wrong with his head too. It was big. They operated on him. Put the stomach in.

TATO

And the head?

CLARA

They operated on the head too.

TATO

Have you seen him?

CLARA

No. -He has tubes coming out of him.

TATO

Is she with him?

CLARA

No. She left. She left town. She couldn't stand it anymore. Going to see him. She couldn't stand it. She went away.

(HE puts his left fingers to the side of his head in a sudden move. SHE speaks as SHE turns to him)

What!

TATO

(Still touching the side of his head)

A scar.

His hand goes to the table. HE looks front. The lights fade to black. Music plays. A waist-high free-standing counter, one and a half by four feet, is placed downstage center.

## Act 2, Scene 3

### Scene 3

A few hours later. A public toilet. There is green and red light on the counter. TATO enters hurriedly. HE is drenched in sweat and out of breath. HE is in a state of terror. HE looks to the left, then to the right. HE takes a knife out of his pocket and puts it on the stand. HE takes his jacket off and rolls up his left sleeve. HE brings the knife to his wrist. The first phrase of "Maria Elena" plays twice. HE looks around him and behind him with great alarm. HE directs the knife towards his wrist again. The same music plays again. HE is now in a more intense state of terror. HE brings the knife to his wrist a third time. The music plays with more urgency. HE throws the knife on the floor, grabs his jacket and runs off into the dark. The lights fade to black. Music plays. The counter is removed.

## Act 2, Scene 4

### Scene 4

Shortly after. MARIA ELENA sits on the upstage side of the bed folding clothes. SHE wears a dress. TATO enters anxiously. HE wears his jacket. THEY sing.

TATO

Maria Elena,  
have you been here all day?

MARIA ELENA

Yes.

TATO

Have you thought of me?

MARIA ELENA

Yes, I've thought about you all day.

(Stretching her hand to him)

The hours of the day passed slowly as I waited for you.

TATO

(Holding her hand)

Yes?

MARIA ELENA

Yes!

(HE brings his other hand to hers)

Do you know how much I love you?

TATO

Yes.

MARIA ELENA

(Bringing her hand down and turning front)

Do you know how afraid I am?

TATO

Of what?

MARIA ELENA

Of this mood you're in.

TATO

Don't be!

MARIA ELENA

(Turning to him)

You said you would come early.

TATO

(Turning front)

I'm sorry.

MARIA ELENA

What made you change your mind?

TATO

(Troubled)

When I walk around the streets I lose my sense of time.

MARIA ELENA

You said you were worried.

TATO sits on the bed and faces her.

TATO

My mind goes around in circles  
and I wonder about things.  
I sink under dark waters  
and I see no reason to live.

(HE reaches for her hand and stands. HE holds her hands in his)

But I think of you Elena,  
I think of you,  
and when I think of you  
a light comes to my heart.

(During the interlude HE puts her hands to his face, his neck and his temples. HE suddenly turns front left as if HE is seeing a hallucination. HE holds both her hands behind him as if to protect her. HE speaks the next stanza)

I go to do something,  
something like to get my coat,  
and I feel I lose myself.

I don't know where I am.

(HE turns to her and sings)

But I think of you Elena,  
I think of you,  
I think of you  
and I know who I am.

(HE puts his arms around her)

Then water comes between us  
and I think I cannot hear you.  
And I'm lost again.

(SHE stands. THEY embrace)

But I think of you Elena,  
I think of you,  
and joy comes into my heart.

THEY face each other with their arms around each other.

TATO

If I've ever hurt you, Elena,

MARIA ELENA

Never.

TATO

please forgive me, Elena.

MARIA ELENA

There is no need.

TATO

Please forgive me.

MARIA ELENA

I already have.

TATO

Life goes through your fingers

MARIA ELENA

It does.

TATO

(THEY start to turn slowly)

so swiftly.

MARIA ELENA

Hold me.

TATO

Life is so frail.

MARIA ELENA

Take me in your arms.

TATO

Life is so frail.

MARIA ELENA

I love you.

TATO

Life is so frail.

TATO

I love you.

TATO

(HE is now facing front. HE stares)

Life is so frail.

MARIA ELENA

I love you.

The lights fade to black.

END OF PART II

**Act 3**

**Act 3, Scene 1**

Scene I

Music plays. It is morning. TOÑA and NICK sit center stage. THEY are in the living room. HE sits in a wheelchair reading the Sunday paper. TOÑA sits to his left. SHE reads a section of the paper.

NICK

(Reading)

Five die in blaze.

(HE reads to himself. TOÑA looks at what HE reads)

Five die in battle in Algeria.

(HE reads to himself. SHE looks at what HE reads)

You didn't bring the comics -the ones in color.

(TOÑA looks at him, then at the newspaper. SHE reaches for the newspaper and starts looking for the comics between each section. Not finding them, SHE starts to look among the pages of each section, gradually becoming more and more frantic)

Don't worry. I can read these other comics -the ones that are not in color. -I prefer the ones in color, but I can read these. -I like the ones in color because I like the fact that they are in a separate section. I like to put the paper to the side and read the comics separately because it's a smaller section and it's neat. -But I can read these even if they are not in color.

(HE folds the page where the black-and-white comics are and gives it to TOÑA)

Read them to me, Toña.

TOÑA

(Reading)

Rosemary: You worry too much. You should take time off and go on a vacation. -Mike: I have to worry. Mr' Jones wants to bring someone new into the department. I'm sure he is planning to replace me. -Rosemary: Did you ask him if he is planning to replace you? -Mike: No, I don't want him to think I'm worried.

(NICK's leg starts to convulse. Then, the rest of his body convulses. SHE puts one hand on his leg and one on the back of his neck and presses down. HE stops convulsing. SHE speaks in a reprimanding manner)

Calm down. -You worry too much. --

(SHE notices an ad in the paper)

Look, Nick, they have a sale on this tire. Look. They look good. -Remember Nick, that we were talking about getting tires?

NICK

Let me see. -What ply are they?

TOÑA

(As SHE looks)

What ply...

NICK

Let me see.

(SHE hands him the paper)

That looks like a good price. Let's buy them. -You go buy them, and then, maybe we could go visit Mother.

TOÑA

Wait a moment, Nick. -Tires are heavy. How can I go to the store, get four tires and carry four tires here? They're too heavy.

NICK

Too heavy. You could never bring them here.

TOÑA

The car cannot be moved either, Nick. -Not till we get tires on it.

HE shakes his head. There is a pause.

NICK

Maybe they deliver.

SHE considers it.

TOÑA

I think they may charge.

NICK

They charge. I'll bet they charge. -And we can't get the car towed because you know how much that costs.

TOÑA

We couldn't get it towed even if we paid. Not without wheels. You can't tow a car Chat has no wheels.

NICK

You're right.

TOÑA

Oh, Nick.

(A moment passes)

I could go buy the tires. Get a cab. Put the tires in the cab. Come here in the cab, with the tires. Get the tires out of the cab. And put them on the car.

NICK

If you bring them I can help you when you get here. I can help you take them out of the cab. And wheel them to the side of our car. And I can help you put them on the car. I still can help.

TOÑA

Yes, Nick.

(Music starts. SHE starts moving her feet to the rhythm while sitting. SHE sings)

Yes, we can, Nick.

Yes, I know we can.

Yes, Nick.

Yes, we can, I know.

We can.

(SHE stands and dances)

You have strong arms.

I have strong legs.

And so we can.

We can. We can.

Yes, I know we can.

THEY face each other and move back and forth across the stage.

NICK

Yes we can, Ton.

Yes, I know we can.

Yes, Ton.

Yes, we can, I know.  
We can.

You have strong legs,  
you can walk.

(SHE makes a complete turn around him)

I have strong arms.

(HE makes a complete turn around her)

And so we can.  
Oh, yes, we can.

THEY face front, side by side. THEY shake their shoulders. THEY shake their hips. THEY turn their backs to each other and repeat the same movements. THEY face upstage and repeat the same movements. THEY face each other.

BOTH

(You/I)

have strong arms.

(I/You)

have strong legs.  
And so we can.  
We can. We can.

(THEY turn forward. THEY shake their shoulders. SHE moves her feet)

Yes, I know we can.

(THEY turn their backs to each other and shake their shoulders and hips)

TOÑA

(Turning NICK a complete turn left. HE places his arms in an arabesque position)

Yes, we can.

(Turning him right. HE reverses his arms)

Yes, we can, I know.

(SHE stands on the chair, HE does a figure eight around her)

We can.  
Yes, I know we can.  
We can.

NICK

You have strong legs.

TOÑA

You have strong arms.

NICK



I have strong arms.

TONA

I have strong legs.

BOTH

And so we can.

We can. We can.

Yes, I know we can.

Yes, I know we can!

Yes, I know we can!

Yes, I know we can!

We can!

NICK

(Speaking)

I could not get in the cab with the wheelchair. And it would be too far for me to wheel myself there and back. It would be too far. And I would be tired. My arms would hurt. I could help you put the tires in the cab there, but couldn't help you on this end. If you went and came back. And I waited. I could help when you get back.

BOTH

(Singing)

Yes, I know we can!

We can!

The lights fade to black. Music plays.

## **Act 3, Scene 2**

### **Scene 2**

The next day. Afternoon. The sidewalk. There is a car propped on railroad ties. NICK is finishing bolting a tire onto the front right wheel. TONA is coming out from under the car. SHE holds a metal piece in her hand. There are three tires piled to the left.

TONA

(Referring to the tires)

Look at them, Nick. Don't they look good.

(Referring to the piece)

What is this, Nick? Do you think this goes somewhere?

NICK

Let me see.

(SHE gives it to him. HE looks at it)

Where did you find it?

TONA

It was on the ground.

NICK

I don't think this is a part of the car.

TOÑA

But if it is, Nick. Don't you think it would be dangerous to ride in the car with the part missing?

NICK

Yes it would.

TOÑA

And don't you think that if we go for a ride, something may fall out of the car and we may crash and die?

NICK

Well, we can go to the garage and ask them if this is a part of the car. They would know.

TOÑA

I'll do that.

NICK

Yes, Toña.

TOÑA

I'll go now, Nick, -because if I don't, something may fall out of the car and we may crash.

NICK

Are you going to walk, Toña?

TOÑA

(Taking the part)

Yes, Nick.

NICK

You go. I'll wait here and watch the tires.

TOÑA

Yes. I'll go in a hurry. Otherwise we're in trouble.

NICK

Why?

TOÑA

Because if night falls we're in trouble. Because how can we leave everything here like this all night long. We would have to stay here all night and take care of the things.

NICK

If that happened we could put the tires in the trunk. -Maybe not all in the trunk. We can't put any in the car because the lock doesn't work.

BOTH

(Singing)

We can put  
the tires  
in the trunk.

One or two,  
perhaps,  
in the trunk.

The others  
we can't put  
in the trunk.

Not all four  
in the trunk. Nor can we  
put the others  
in the car.

Not inside  
the car  
'cause the lock  
doesn't work.

NICK

(Speaking)

We can put two in the trunk and roll two to our place and into our house.

BOTH

(Singing)

We can put  
two  
in the trunk,  
and roll  
two  
to our place.

TOÑA

(Speaking)

Or I can go, check the part, come back and put the four tires on the car, before dark.

BOTH

(Singing)

Check the part  
and put  
the four tires  
on the car

before dark.

TOÑA

If I hurry I can check the part, come back, and finish putting the tires on the car before dark.

NICK

Go, Ton. I'll stay here and take care of all this. I think if someone wanted to steal them, they would be more reluctant to steal them if I'm here because I'm a man. -Even if I'm in a wheelchair.

TOÑA

I'll go, Nick.

NICK

Take money in case you have to buy something.

(Taking the part)

This may be: a part that's broken and you have to buy a new one...or a part that needs a screw to attach it.

TOÑA

How much do you think?

NICK

I think about fourteen dollars.

TOÑA

(Taking the part)

Right. I'll take fourteen dollars.

Music plays. SHE walks left, stops and shakes her buttocks as SHE turns her head towards him. The lights fade to black.

### **Act 3, Scene 3**

Scene 3

The same day. Early evening. TOÑA is tightening the last bolt on the back wheel. NICK sits in the wheelchair to the right.

TOÑA

What dangers? Are you crazy?

NICK

Why do you say I'm crazy. You're always talking about dangers. You know there are dangers, Toña.

TOÑA

Well, the car is going to be O'K' Nothing's missing.

NICK

No. I don't mean the car. What I mean is that there are other dangers, Toña. You see for example now. Night falls. As night falls it gets dark. We are outside and it becomes harder to distinguish us. We cannot be seen in the dark.

TONA

(As SHE turns the bolts)

Well maybe it is better that we cannot be distinguished. That way no one would be jumping on us since they wouldn't be able to see us....At least not clearly enough. For example, they wouldn't know if we are armed. That's enough to keep anyone from trying to attack us.

NICK

That's true. But I still would prefer if you hurry so we could finish and go up.

TONA

Oh, yes, I'm hurrying. I agree with you. I'm not taking any longer than I need to. I'm almost done. I don't think we should stay here any longer than we need to. I just have this to do: pick up the tools, wheel you back, and help you in, and then get the wheelchair and prepare dinner.

The lights fade to black. Music plays.

### **Act 3, Scene 4**

Scene 4

The next day. Afternoon. NICK is in bed covered up to his chin. TONA is holding a bottle of cough medicine in one hand and a teaspoon in the other. NICK swallows.

NICK

I never had bronchitis before but I swear I do now. I can feel my lungs rattling everytime I cough.

TONA

Let me get the thermometer. -I hope you don't have a fever.

(SHE sits)

It is my fault. You wanted to come in and I kept you out after dark. I know it was too cool for you. I was working and moving around and I felt warm but you were still, so I'm sure that's why you caught a cold.

NICK

Bronchitis. I think it's bronchitis. Listen to my chest.

(SHE puts her ear to his chest. HE coughs)

Hear that?

TONA

Yes.

(SHE sits)

NICK

Don't blame yourself. I didn't feel the cold. I wanted to come in because I didn't like being out in the dark, because of danger. It wasn't that I thought I was going to catch cold. I wasn't thinking of that.

TONA

It's nice of you to say that, but still you were asking me to finish so we could go in and if I had, you may not have caught

this bronchitis.

NICK

I should've known better and come in out of the cold. -Are you making me soup? Chicken soup? I would like to have some chicken soup.

TOÑA

That is just what I'm making for you. Some chicken soup. So you can get better.

NICK

(Sings)

Soup  
on my lips  
will do them good.

Soup  
down my throat  
will do me good.

Soup  
in my mouth  
will do me good.

NICK

Oh,  
how good it smells.

Did you use  
the leg or the breast?

TOÑA

(Spoken)

Both.

NICK

Toña... Toña...  
Did you use  
potatoes  
in the soup?

TOÑA

Yes.

NICK

Did you put  
noodles  
in the soup?

TOÑA

For you.

NICK

Does it taste  
like it always did?

TOÑÁ

Yes.

NICK

What else  
did you use?

TOÑÁ

Cilantro.

NICK

What else  
did you use?

TOÑÁ

(Spoken)

A little garlic.

NICK

And then?

TOÑÁ

(Spoken)

That's all.

NICK

A little onion?

TOÑÁ

(Spoken)

Onion.

NICK

Ohhhh...ohhh...ohhh...  
Ohhhh...ohhh...ohhh...  
When will it be done?

TOÑÁ

(Spoken)

Soon.

BOTH

Ah ah ah ah  
Ah ah ah ah

(Spoken)

Chicken soup. Chicken soup.  
Ah ah ah ah  
Ah ah ah ah

(Spoken)

Chicken soup. Chicken soup.

NICK

I'm sorry we cannot go for a ride today, Toña.

TOÑA

Yes I know.

NICK

I'm sorry that my being sick is keeping you from going on that ride.

TOÑA

Oh no. Don't be sorry. We can go for a ride next Sunday if you're well.

The lights fade to black. Music plays.

### **Act 3, Scene 5**

Scene 5

Three days later. Late afternoon. The same as before. NICK lies in bed unconscious. FRED sits to the left facing right. Through this whole scene FRED is quiet and thoughtful.

TOÑA

I don't know, Fred, He's so ill that he may die. That is what the doctor said. The doctor actually said that to me. He said "Nick may die." just because we stayed out and it was cold. I was working and I didn't feel cold, but he was sitting because he can't move the way I can and he was cold.

(SHE sings)

His poor bones  
were cold,  
my Nico's bones.

My lover man  
who's old,  
and can  
no longer walk.

The love  
of all my life.  
He can no longer  
lift his head.

His eyes



no longer open  
to look into my eyes.

Sweet Nick,  
he can no longer  
lift his head.

He can no longer hold  
my hand.

When I speak to him  
sometimes I think  
he hears me. How can he not  
hear me,  
my Nick.

How can he not  
hear me,  
my Nick.

Not hear me.  
Not hear me.  
Where is my Nick,  
my Nick?

Sometimes I go close to him, and I think he's dead. I sit him up in the chair and his head hangs down. He can't hold it up. Sometimes he hears the birds in the yard and he opens his eyes. He wants to feed them but he can't move. He can't even lift his head. My sweet angel. May God give you strength.

(SHE takes the cough medicine from the night table, pours some on the teaspoon and puts it in NICK's mouth. SHE puts the medicine and spoon on the night table, fixes the blanket around him and sits down. NICK swallows and licks his lips)

Fred, look! He's licking his lips!

(Music starts)

He likes the taste of it! He's going to be all right! Fred, he's going to be all right! Look at him, Fred, he's licking his lips!

(Going to NICK)

He's going to be all right.

(SHE kneels by him and sings)

When I speak to him  
sometimes I think  
he hears me.

(SHE turns to look up at heaven)

How can he not  
hear me,  
my Nick.

How can he not  
hear me,  
my Nick.

The lights fade to black. Music plays.

### **Act 3, Scene 6**

#### **Scene 6**

In the blackout, there is the sound of a car horn. Music starts. The lights come up. The car now faces front. TOÑA sits on the driver's seat. NICK is to her right. FRED and FINA sit on the back seat. TOÑA, FRED and FINA wear straw hats. NICK wears a knitted cap and an afghan around his shoulders. TOÑA starts the car. There is a simulation of the car moving. TATO is on the street to the right tying his shoelace. MARIA ELENA stands next to him. CLARA is standing on the left. SHE looks to the left.

TOÑA

Don't worry, Nick, we'll find a place in the shade where we can feed the birds.

THEY whistle and wave. The lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY

### **Act 3, Scene 6**

#### **Scene 6**

In the blackout, there is the sound of a car horn. Music starts. The lights come up. The car now faces front. TOÑA sits on the driver's seat. NICK is to her right. FRED and FINA sit on the back seat. TOÑA, FRED and FINA wear straw hats. NICK wears a knitted cap and an afghan around his shoulders. TOÑA starts the car. There is a simulation of the car moving. TATO is on the street to the right tying his shoelace. MARIA ELENA stands next to him. CLARA is standing on the left. SHE looks to the left.

TOÑA

Don't worry, Nick, we'll find a place in the shade where we can feed the birds.

THEY whistle and wave. The lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY